Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Rural District of Plomesgate.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit to you my Annual Report upon the Sanitary condition of the Rural District of Plomesgate for the year 1920.

Population.

The population in 1911 was 15,703 and that estimated for the middle of the year 1920 was 13,677.

Physical Features.

The district is for the most part flat with slight undulations. It is well wooded and the soil varies from heavy clay inland to very light sandy soil near the coast where the subsoil is gravel. Inland the subsoil is blue clay. The land is chiefly arable, with a fairly large proportion of pasture.

Occupation.

The inhabitants of the district are almost entirely occupied with agricultural pursuits.

Vital Statistics: Births.

The number of births registered during the year 1920 was 369, being 100 in excess of the number registered in the previous year, and giving a birth-rate of 26·9 per 1000 inhabitants, as compared with 20·6 in 1919. Of these births 187 were males and 182 females. During the year there were 31 illegitimate births.

Deaths.

During the year 190 deaths were registered, 95 being males and 95 females. The death-rate works out at 13·8 per 1,000, as compared with 17·1 in the previous year. 23 of the deaths were of infants under 1 year of age, giving a death-rate of 62·3 per 1,000 births. The rate for 1919 was 78·3

Outbreaks of Infectious Disease.

There were 82 cases of Infectious Disease notified, being 55 less than in 1919. Of these, 22 were of Scarlet Fever, 45 of Diphtheria, 1 of Dysentery, 2 of Puerperal Fever, 1 of Malaria, 3 of Ophthalmia Neonatorum, 7 of Pneumonia and Erysipelas 1.

12 cases of Tuberculosis of the Lungs were notified and 7 cases of other forms.

Scarlet Fever.

Cases of Scarlet Fever occurred in 6 parishes, the most serious outbreak being at Framlingham, where 12 cases occurred. 1 death was attributed to this disease.

Diphtheria.

The cases of Diphtheria occurred mainly in parishes in the north-west part of the district, along the low lying land between Framlingham and Snape. 2 deaths were registered from Diphtheria.

Measles. Outbreaks occurred at Sudbourne, Easton and Wickham Market, the schools being closed in the two former parishes. 1 death was registered from this disease.

Tuberculosis. There were 8 deaths from Tuberculosis of the Lungs and 4 from other forms of that disease as compared with a total of 20 in the previous year.

Influenza. This disease was not very prevalent at any time during the year, but 7 deaths were attributed to it and its sequelæ.

Smallpox & Enteric. No case of Smallpox or Enteric occurred during the year.

Cancer. During the year 18 deaths were registered from the various forms of Cancer.

Water. The supply of water throughout the year has been satisfactory both as regards quality and quantity. There are no water works in the district, the supply being obtained from ponds and wells, the latter varying in depth from 10—100 feet. During the year I examined 27 samples (some in duplicate), 6 of which were found to be unfit for drinking purposes. These supplies were rendered fit by cleansing, or closed.

A certain amount of undesirable matter still finds its way into the streams at various places.

Drainage and Sewage. Framlingham is the only parish in the district which has a system of drainage with sewage works. Partial systems exist at Wickham Market and Orford.

There are a few dead wells in the area.

Closet Accommodation. Closet accommodation consists of water closets (340 approx.), pails (400 approx.) and privies (2,800 approx.), the vaults of which are cleaned out as often as is necessary. The contents of the pails and vaults are used as manure on the gardens and allotments. The vault system is being altered to pails as occasion offers.

Sanitary Inspection of District. I have visited all parts of the district and inspected any house or premises where I have had reason to suspect a nuisance to exist. I have visited all houses in which an infectious disease has been notified, inspected the premises, given instructions as to the isolation of the patient and the use of disinfectants which are supplied.

The isolation of cases of infectious disease is carried out as far as possible ; there is no isolation hospital in the district, but, where necessary, cases have been removed to the Isolation Hospital at Ipswich.

The Sanitary Inspector reports that he has visited 1,400 houses during the year and served 10 statutory notices and 33 informal notices to abate nuisances, and has also personally seen many owners and induced them to abate nuisances without sending them a formal notice. In all cases the notices were attended to satisfactorily.

Schools' Sanitary Condition. The public elementary schools all have a satisfactory supply of water and are fitted with pail closets, which are systematically attended to by persons appointed for the purpose.

Any suspected case of Infectious or Contagious disease among the pupils is at once reported to me by the Head Teacher and steps are at once taken to ascertain the nature of the disease and where necessary to close the school or exclude the pupils from attendance. In all cases of closure the schools are disinfected before being re-opened.

Milk. There are 60 purveyors of milk registered under the Dairies and Cowsheds Order, the premises being visited twice during the year, and on the whole have been found in a satisfactory condition. The surplus milk produced in the district is almost entirely dealt with at the Creamery near Wickham Market Station.

Housing.

The Housing Committee have commenced the building of 62 houses, several of which are finished and occupied, and 3 others have been built by private individuals. 40 other houses in the district have been improved by their respective owners.

No complaints were received from householders or Parish Councils that any houses were unfit for habitation. No closing orders were made during the year, but 3 houses beyond repair were demolished.

I have the honour to be

My Lords and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

J. CORDY KEER,

Medical Officer of Health
Plomesgate Rural District.

WICKHAM MARKET,
May, 1921.